175 Baangoni had to give up their plan to subjugate the Babembas. They turned towards Tabora. After their victory over the Baangoni, the Babemba on the other hand, carried the war into the territories of their cowardly neighbors, whom they subjugated and ruled with an [797] iron hand. When Mgr. Dupont came to the terrible kingdom of the Babemba for the first time, the tribe had established its rule over a territory which was twice the size of the present Vicarage. The neighboring tribes would tremble at the mere mention of the word [648] Babemba. Even today we can hear songs cursing the cruelty of the Babemba among the tribes of Tanganyika and Broken Hill.

161 The present population of the Babemba is about 100, 000. The wars of the past have decimated them.

181 The most outstanding characteristic of the Babemba is that they are a war-like tribe to the highest degree, dreaming only of pillage, battle, submission of neighboring tribes, imposition of overburdening tributes, expansion and aggrandizement of the kingdom, but all this by means of a civil and military organization which is indeed remark- [157] able. The Babemba are one of the most intelligent races of Africa. [192] They have an exceedingly rich language including more than 20, 000 [538] words; they have a literature of their own consisting of martial poetry, songs of all kinds, more than 1500 proverbs, several hundred riddles, about a thousand axioms, etc.; a treasure bequeathed by their ancestors

157 In mining centers the Babembas are known for their keenness [zeal], their polite manners, their respect for authority, and their spirit of initiative.

484 My picture would not be complete if I did not mention the fact that the Babemba of today are perhaps the greatest adventurers of Central Africa. You meet Babemba everywhere. There are Babemba in Zanzibar, Panda, Lindi, Bulawayo, in Broken Hill, the Belgian Congo, in Transvaal and on the Cape. The Mubemba does not find it difficult to move; he can take care of himself, and he is at home everywhere.

584 ENGAGEMENT [Kukobeka]: Engagement takes place at an early age, around ten or twelve years, when the young betrothed are not yet nubile [amabele tayalakul [21]

Consent: An emissary [Shibukombe], who does not belong to the clan of those who wish to become engaged, is chosen. He is a man who enjoys a certain amount of prestige in the village and can speak out

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

PART I

THE PEOPLE—THEIR COUNTRY AND DIET

CHAPTER I

THE BEMBA PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

Origin.

THE Bemba are the largest and most highly organized tribe in North-Eastern Rhodesia.[1] They are a warrior people of Congo origin which apparently invaded their present territory at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century. Moving eastwards from the banks of the Kasai, they eventually reached the great Luapula river which forms the western boundary of this part of Northern Rhodesia. They passed north of the Bangweolu swamps, according to most traditions, travelled up the Chambesi in a north-easterly direction, and finally established their Paramount chief, the Citimukulu, in the centre of this Tanganyika plateau not far from the present Government station of Kasama. From this point they gradually expanded, pushing back earlier immigrants of the same origin, such as the Bisa, either in a west and south-westerly direction into the swamps of Lake Bangweolu, or eastwards to the borders of the Luangwa valley. They also drove wedges into the territory of the Lungu, Itabwa, and Mambwe to the north. Hence numbers of scattered tribelets came to acknowledge the rule of the Citimukulu and paid him tribute, and groups of his chosen followers were settled in the outlying districts to exact these dues. His power seems to have been still further consolidated by the arrival of Arab traders in the middle of the nineteenth century, since they brought him guns, of which he kept complete possession, in return for ivory and slaves. In fact before the coming of the white man at the end of the century it seems that the Citimukulu held sway over the whole of the district between the four great lakes, Tanganyika, Nyasa, Bangweolu, and Mweru, and south into the present Lala and Lamba country. With the

[1] J. Moffat Thomson gives the following figures for the biggest tribes of NE. Rhodesia: Bemba 114,274, Cewa 78,400, Ngoni 53,991, and none of the other tribal groups number more than 30,000. N. Rhodesian Government 'Memorandum on the native tribes and tribal areas of N. Rhodesia', 1934.

101
174
[161]
[p. 15]

101 considered here but will be discussed in a forthcoming section concerned
131 with the peoples of the eastern shore of southern Lake Tanganyika and adjacent regions.

In brief, the Bemba-Lala-Lamba-Kaonde groups, with their closely related sub-groups, occupy almost the whole of North-eastern Rhodesia and the northern parts of North-western Rhodesia, besides adjacent areas of the Belgian Congo.

132 With the exception of the swamp-dwelling groups, the Unga and the Twa,
133 all live under broadly similar conditions. Plentiful rainfall waters the generally unproductive plateau soils covered by deciduous woodland. The density of population which such land can carry is small, reaching only to
161 about 12 persons per square mile, and this figure is not exceeded, or even approached, except in reserves where local over-population of a serious nature occurs, and in the swamp areas where inundation creates a land shortage either permanent or seasonal. The total population of the selected groups can be reckoned to be about 440,000.

GENERAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

197 The languages of these peoples are closely similar, so much so that the whole group of peoples in this area has been loosely termed "Bemba-speaking".(1) Guthrie, however, distinguishes within one of his linguistic zones *Bemba* with *Aushi* as a sub-dialect; *Tabwa* with *Shila* as a sub-dialect; and a further group of closely related languages, *Bisa, Lamba, Lala, Swaka,* and *Sewa.*(2) He places *Kaonde* in a different linguistic zone, L, because it has certain distinct features, such as a single prefix in independent nominals, which make it more closely related to the Luba group of languages. No mention is made of the languages spoken by other small groups closely related to the Bemba, such as Chishinga, Mukulu, Ngumbu, Kawendi, and Bwile. What little is known about the languages spoken by the Unga and Twa suggests that they may be closely related to Bisa.

174 There is apparently little linguistic evidence to support the tradi-
173 tion held by all these peoples that they originated in areas west of the Luapula from peoples of Luba stock, although Richards says that Bemba told her that archaic words they used in ceremonies at their Paramount's court were "Ciluba".

105 These people practise shifting cultivation with finger millet as the staple crop in the east and cassava in the west. The absence of cattle in the area distinguishes them from the Mambwe to the north and some of the Ngoni to the east. The greater part of the area lies within the tsetse belt, but Lambo mentions that cattle were used as marriage payments among the Lala, and a few goats and sheep are kept by the Bemba and probably by other tribes. Hunting was highly developed in the west of the area before the arrival of Europeans and hunting guilds and associations are recorded.

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, p.16, and Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Guthrie, 1948. A zone is both a geographical and a linguistic concept in that the languages within it have both linguistic affinities and geographical propinquity.

4:Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

I. THE BEMBA AND RELATED PEOPLES

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

NOMENCLATURE

The Bemba and Bisa were formerly known as the Wemba and Wisa on account of the fact that the initial consonant is a bi-labial fricative the sound of which is midway between a European W and a B. In the new orthography B is used to represent this sound. The Aushi (also called Batushi, Ba-usi, Wa-uzhi, Wa-usi) were formerly known as Ushi but the nomenclature here adopted is now generally accepted.

The Unga are described in Belgian publications as Honja, while Kawendi are also sometimes described as Bena and Kabende.

POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The Bemba are the largest tribe in Northern Rhodesia; their numbers in 1933 being given as 114,274,(1) although a later figure suggests that 140,000(2) is more accurate. The 1933 figures for the other groups are as follows:-

Bisa	41,591	Ngumbu	24,116
Aushi	28,958 *	Chishinga	22,604
Unga	13,670	Tabwa	7,918 *
Kawendi	9,189	Shila	5,536 *
Mukulu	10,522	Bwile	4,745
		Twa	1,480

(* Excluding groups living in the Belgian Congo)

The density of population is difficult to estimate on account of wide local variations; an impression may be gained from the following estimates for administrative districts:-

	Persons per square mile	
	1938(3)	1949(4)
(Chiengi	4.05)	Not listed as a district in subsequent publications
Mporokoso	4.05	4.6
Abercorn	6.2	6.9
Isoka	3.54	4.6
Kasama	6.67	8.0
Luwingu	7.86	9.2
Fort Rosebery	7.79	8.0
Chinsali	3.46	3.7
Mpika	1.86	2.3

(1) Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Richards, 6, 1939.
(3) Pim, 1938.
(4) Appendix F. *Report of the Financial Relationship Committee*, Lusaka 1949. The source of these figures is not, however, stated.

161 These figures are likely to be inaccurate for the reserves, although the 1938 Commission reported no serious overpopulation; they certainly give an entirely misleading picture with regard to the swamp area for which Trapnell(1) notes local densities of approximately 150 and 340 persons per square mile, and a later work estimates density as high as 400 per square mile in one area and over 200 per square mile in another.(2) Labour migration affects these figures but this subject is dealt with later.

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

175 It is probable that, with the possible exception of the Twa, all the groups in the area came to their present habitat from west of the Luapula River in the Congo, and that they are offshoots of the great Luba tribe. There are detailed studies of the traditions of only the Bemba, Aushi and Unga, with scattered comments on the Twa.

The *Bemba*, in their incursion into their present habitat seem to have been preceded by the Bisa and followed by the Lunda, whom Lacerda visited in 1798 and whom Coxhead believes to have arrived c. 1740.(3) On their arrival the Bemba began to expand rapidly, pushing back both the Bisa and Lala to the south(4) and the Lungu and Mambwe people in the north. Livingstone passed through Bemba country early in 1867, coming in contact with them for the first time in the country north-east of Lake Bangweulu. He comments on the war-like nature of these peoples whose villages were walled and surrounded with a dry moat.(5)

At the time of the establishment of the British South Africa Company in 1899 at Kasama, the Bemba Paramount Chief held sway over the whole of the area between Lakes Mweru, Bangweulu, Nyasa and Tanganyika, and southwards into the present Lala and Lamba country. There is still a small group of Bemba near Tabora in Tanganyika.

There is little to indicate how the Bemba fought, or the nature of their military organisation. Their campaigns seem to have been essentially raids, operations with groups of mobile, well-armed, determined warriors but not on the scale of those of the highly organised Ngoni with whom they had contacts in the east. There was certainly a flourishing trade with Arab slave traders for guns and ammunition, which contributed in no small way to the success of their campaigns.(6)

The *Aushi*, probably an offshoot of the Lunda people of the Congo prior to their migration eastward, arrived in the area shortly after the Lunda chief, Kazembe, assumed power in the area south of Lake Mweru, c. 1750.(7) Their traditions are closely bound up with their tribal god, *Makumba*, a symbol of the authority of the Aushi Paramount Chief. At the time of their

(1) Trapnell, 1943, p.71.
(2) Brelsford, 5, 1946.
(3) Coxhead, 1914.
(4) See Lala - p.33 below for different version.
(5) Waller, 1874.
(6) Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1904. Cf. "Life of Bwembya" by A.I. Richards in *Ten Africans*, edited by M. Perham, 1936.
(7) Philpot, 1936.

Hi Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5
Senga

VI. A NOTE ON THE SENGA

(A Tumbuka-ised offshoot of the Bisa
in the upper Luangwa valley)

POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

No figures specific to the Senga are available but Moffat Thomson[1] gives a figure of 67,477 for both Senga and Nsenga, while Poole gives 44,000 for the Nsenga in 1930. This suggests a figure of 23,000 for the Senga.

A rough idea of the density of population may be found in the figures for administrative districts in 1934[2] and in 1947 (c).[2]

	1934		1947
Chinsali	3.46	per square mile	3.7
Lundazi	5.49	" " "	5.9

A number of Senga share Northern reserve no.13 with other groups.

LANGUAGE

The difference between the Senga and the Nsenga is to be seen in language, although confusion has obscured the difference for some years. For instance, Madan's[3] *Senga Handbook* actually refers to the Nsenga, as does Ranger's *Chinsenga Grammar*,[4] although it is not clear from the latter's preface whether he includes the Senga and thus confuses them. Doke[5] makes no reference to Senga as distinct from Nsenga, but whether from lack of material or from the belief that there was no distinction is not clear. Guthrie,[6] however, draws a distinction. While he places both Senga and Nsenga in the same linguistic zone, Senga is considered to be a dialect of Tumbuka while Nsenga is a language in a different group, more closely related to languages spoken in Portuguese East Africa. While paucity of information on Senga precludes anything more than this tentative classification, the available evidence suggests a fairly well marked linguistic difference between the two.

HISTORY

Tribal traditions seem to agree that the Senga originally migrated eastwards from the Luapula in company with the Bisa, of whom indeed they formed a part.[7] After a period spent near Lake Bangweulu, from which they were dislodged by Bemba raids, they crossed the Luangwa river about 1800, a date tentatively suggested by Poole. On their arrival here there seems to have been considerable intermarriage with the Tumbuka on the plateau to the east of the river, as a result of which some similarity to Tumbuka customs may be expected.

Bemba and Ngoni raids seem always to have been a menace, even in the

(1) Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Pim, 1938, and *Report of the Financial Relationship Committee, 1949.*
(3) Madan, 1905.
(4) Ranger, 1928.
(5) Doke, 1945.
(6) Guthrie, 1948.
(7) Poole, 1934.

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Luapula Peoples

Tabwa (Aitawa), Lungu, Bemba, and Aushi (including their off-shoots the Kawendi and Mukulo). In addition there are Bwile (Bwiri), Mambwe, Bisa, Ngumbo, Mukulu, Lala, Lamba, Lomotwa, Yeke (Nyamwezi) and Swahili elements. The presence of the Batembo pygmies, whom Maes and Boone(1) place just south of Lake Mweru on their tribal map of the region, is not confirmed by other authorities. The extent of tribal mixture is shown by the fact that the headmen of thirty-four villages in Kambwali's chiefdom belong to eleven different tribes. None of the tribes is indigenous to the valley.

The tribe, *mutundu* (pl. *mitundu*: the word is also used for a species of animal, bird or tree) or *mushyobo*, is not a descent group. Tribal allegiance, unlike clan affiliation, can be changed with residence. Though never in doubt about their clan, people may be uncertain as to their tribe. Inter-tribal differences in custom were never considerable. Neither physical type, form of settlement, nor language are now reliable indications of tribal origin. Certain characteristics are traditionally attributed to particular tribes: the Bemba are proverbially cruel, the Shila good fishermen and canoe-makers; the Tabwa are renowned as witches and for the beauty of their women,(2) the Lomotwa for their quarrelsomeness. In spite of territorial dispersion, members of a tribe consider themselves *lupwa luno*, "of one stock". The chiefs of neighbouring tribes occasionally visit their former subjects established in Kazembe's country.

The Lunda possessed a special status and constituted a sort of nobility to which distinguished outsiders - non-Lunda chiefs and headmen - could be admitted by being invested with Lundahood (*ubulunda*).

DEMOGRAPHY

No estimates are available for the population in the valley on the western (Belgian Congo) side. On the eastern side in Northern Rhodesia it was estimated by Coxhead at 32,000 in 1914.(3) He made no attempt, however, to distinguish between the various tribal groups, referring to all the subjects of the Kazembe as "the Lunda". According to more recent estimates the eastern population approaches 50,000 and shows signs of rapid expansion. It is now concentrated in some 300 villages strewn along the Luapula by the trunk road built on the hard land next to the riverside swamps. No figures are available to indicate variations in the density of population, which must be very high locally as many of the villages adjoin one another forming a continuous row of habitations along the side of the road.

Except for missionaries there are no resident Europeans in Kazembe's kingdom. On Nkuba's side a group of colonial officials and traders live at Kasenga.

Mobility has always been high and numbers have fluctuated widely as a result of migrations due to wars and to the popularity of individual chiefs.(4) A large proportion of the population is said to have left the country during the reign of Keleka, the fourth Kazembe, remembered for his atrocities.(5)

(1) Maes and Boone, 1935, p.135.
(2) Livingstone, 1874, I, p.259.
(3) Coxhead, 1914, p.64.
(4) Livingstone, op.cit., p.254.
(5) Livingstone, op.cit., p.265.

7: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

ciples of social grouping such as descent, age, sex differences, or local ties by which the tribe may be integrated and the incidence of authority determined; (*d*) the economic bases of the people's activities which affect their degree of dispersal, the form of leadership required, and the economic values associated with political prerogatives; (*e*) the type of foreign rule to which the tribe is subject and the European elements that are effecting its political development, i.e. variations in policy from the administrative system known as Indirect Rule in Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Uganda, to the more direct government by the white man in South Africa or the attempts made to create new political institutions for Natives, such as the Bunga system of the Transkei.

All these factors will be found to account for differences in political organization among a number of the kindred peoples known as the Bantu, and I shall try to analyse the Bemba system along these lines.

II. The Bemba Tribe

(*a*) *Tribal Composition.* The Bemba tribe at present inhabits the Tanganyika plateau of north-eastern Rhodesia, between the four great lakes—Tanganyika to the north-east, Nyassa to the east, and Mweru and Bangweolu to the north-west and west respectively. They number to-day about 140,000, very sparsely scattered over the country at a density of an average 3·75 per square mile.

The Bemba trace their origin to the area now known as the Belgian Congo and declare that they were originally an offshoot from the great Luba people which inhabits the Kasai district. The fact that the first ancestor of the Bemba is known as Citi Muluba ('Citi the Luban') substantiates this tradition, together with the cultural similarities still noted between the two peoples and the fact that Luban words, no longer understood by the Bemba commoner, are still used as part of the religious ritual at the paramount chief's court. The legends of immigration are numerous and circumstantial. The first arrivals apparently crossed the Lualaba River, which forms the western boundary of their present territory, about the middle of the eighteenth century, and travelled north and east until they established their first headquarters near Kasama, the present administrative centre of the Bemba country. From the sociological point of view, their history